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Announcement: Rio Tinto Explores Options to Sell Rio Tinto Energy America

When Rio Tinto announced its acquisition of Alcan, it also announced that a strategic review of all the assets of the enlarged Group would be undertaken. As part of that review Rio Tinto has decided to explore the option to sell some or all of Rio Tinto Energy America (RTEA) its wholly owned US business unit that is the second largest US coal producer by tonnage. RTEA operates five coal mines in Colorado, Montana and Wyoming. RTEA has notified its 2,400 employees of this process.

Colin Marshall, President & CEO of Rio Tinto Energy America, commented that "Rio Tinto Energy America is a leader within the U.S. coal industry in terms of safety and operating performance. However, it is not positioned to take advantage of the rapidly growing Asian market, particularly China, which Rio Tinto is focusing on. Rio Tinto recognizes that coal will continue to play a vital role in meeting US energy needs both now and in the future. One of the reasons for exploring the sale of RTEA is that due to the current positive outlook for western coal in the US, it is a valuable business. The sale review process will take some months. During that time, RTEA will be focused on running the mines safely and efficiently, as always."

The Rio Tinto Group is a world leader in finding, extracting and processing the earth's mineral resources. RTEA specializes in the production of low sulfur, sub-bituminous coal, and operates five coal mines located in Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. With a combined workforce of more than 2,400 employees, and with the help of hundreds of contractors and suppliers, the company provides fuel to

its energy company customers who generate nearly six percent of the nation's electricity. For more information on RTEA, visit www.rtea.com.

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